

arc 3493

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December 15, 1999

To Seattle City Council Members and Mayor Paul Schell:

I am writing on behalf of my son, Robert S. Merki, who was injured during the week of the WTO meeting. On Wednesday, December 1, 1999, he had an appointment in the Medical/Dental Building, also known as the Downtown Medical Center, at 509 Olive Way. He had no trouble getting to his appointment which was at 4:00 P.M. However, when he came out onto Olive Way, a bit after 5:00 P.M., the street was crowded with protesters, and the police were there, apparently trying to move the group out of that area.

First he was tear-gassed, at least he assumed it was tear gas, with the result that he couldn't see, couldn't breathe, and became disoriented. Next he was knocked down by the protesters, kicked in the ribs a few times and his clothing was ripped. By two days later his one eye was still very painful and his eyesight still blurred.

On Friday, December 3, 1999, he consulted a neighbor who is a nurse at Providence Hospital. She told him there was something stuck in his eye, and drove him to Providence Emergency Room. His exam there revealed that a foreign object was embedded in the cornea and they referred him to an ophthalmologist. The ophthalmologist surgically removed a piece of charred material from his cornea on Saturday, 12-4-99 at Highline Medical Clinic and prescribed a follow-up visit. His follow up appointment was at Swedish Medical Clinic with a laser eye surgeon.

The end result is that he will not have sight impairment and he feels that he is extremely fortunate. However, he is a self employed contractor and missed several days of work, on top of which he will have several rather large medical bills out of this. He has medical coverage, however, there is a \$1000.00 deductible.

I do want to stress that he is an ordinary citizen, who was going about his business and ended with his health and safety threatened by the poor planning and management of the WTO events. Earlier that same day the Governor had even gone on Live TV announcing that it was safe for people to go downtown and shop.

I am writing to ask if some sort of reparations will be available for citizens who suffered injuries and incurred expenses through no fault of their own?

I would also like to know who made the decision to invite the WTO to Seattle? Whoever it was, I strongly suggest that in the future they look at possible scenarios more carefully and take the safety

Citation: Letter from Jeanette Merki to Seattle City Council, December 15, 1999. 1802-01, City Clerk Files 304446, arc 3493, ARC 36, Unsorted. Seattle Municipal Archives.

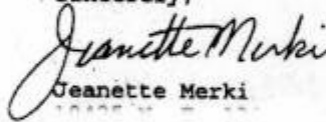
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R. Merki letter

of Seattle area citizens more into consideration than the interests of the local "big name" corporations.

My son's name and address are as follows:
Robert

I appreciate your consideration of this information.

Sincerely,


Jeanette Merki